

Jays back to their winning ways



By Jake Courtepatte

The perennial powerhouse Aurora Jays didn't look like themselves in their North Dufferin Baseball League season opener last week.

A team known for its power, four runs were all the boys in blue and white could muster in a loss to the New Lowell Knights.

This week, the Jays of old were back with offensive vengeance.

Back on their home field of Lambert Willson Park on Tuesday, the Jays took the Creemore Braves for a ride in a 13 ? 3 win, which was eventually mercy-ruled. Brad Crosby, a pitching veteran for the Jays, was on the mound for the first time this season in the win.

The first road game of the season came on Thursday, visiting the Cornhuskers in nearby Nobleton. The Jays have had the Huskers' number offensively in recent years, who were still looking for their first win of the season.

Scott Traverse, having pitched well in Nobleton's back-to-back losses to the Creemore squads the week before, took to the mound to start the game. He struggled mightily in the first inning against the Jays, whose bats were on fire. Chris Bloom got his team off to a good start with a lead-off single down the middle, followed by an Ian Rettie single. Crosby added another one to load the bases with zero outs, a sign of what was to come for perhaps the Jays biggest offensive weapons in the game.

Chris Rettie was walked to bring in the first run of the game, but was countered by a Cornhuskers' blooper single in the bottom of the inning to tie it.

A handful of walks, combined with quite a collection of Huskers' errors, put the Jays back in front 2 ? 1 after two innings. The third sparked some deja-vu of the first, with Crosby hitting a single before being brought in with a nice slide at the plate. Stephen Vallee then hit a double to plate two more runs, making the score 5 ? 1 after three innings.

It was more of the same in the fourth, when Ian Rettie hit a lead-off home run on a high pitch that would only make it out of Nobleton's extra-short park. Ted Beadle added a double off the left-field wall on the very next pitch on a line drive that may have been longer than the home run.

The entire order went through the fourth, with Ian Rettie eventually coming back to the plate only to take a base after being hit by a pitch. A Jake Pinnegar double to the wall brought him in all the way from first, his second run of the inning making the score 7 ? 1. Traverse was chased from the mound in the inning before the Jays bats settled down in a blow-out victory.

Ian Milne, another Jay who has taken the mound for the team plenty of times in the past, was handed the win.

The pitching rotation, as well as the batting order, remains largely the same from the Jays' successful 2014 regular season ? a lineup that Jays coach Rob Wilson said he's quite content with.

?We've got a few new faces from junior, but most of the same guys are back,? said Wilson. ?What worked for us last year can hopefully work for us again this year.?

Wilson said he's also happy to see the offence opening back up.

?It's always nice to be getting run support. Our pitching is very good, but it's always nice to give them some breathing room.?

Now holding a 2 ? 1 record, the Jays sit second in NDBL standings ? a position they are all too familiar with. New Lowell has taken the league by storm with four straight wins to start the season.

Following a home game on Tuesday with the Angus Black Sox, the Jays hit the road Friday for their only game this weekend against the Ivy Leafs. The Leafs defeated the Jays in the championship matchup last season.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.ndbl.ca.